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On the Approach



Administrator's Message



*Christopher Willenborg
MassDOT - Aeronautics
Division Administrator*

Greetings from the MassDOT Aeronautics Division!

During the month of March, the weather was not kind to our airports and aviation due to the torrential rains and significant flooding throughout the Commonwealth (see article, *March Madness*, on page 4) Our airports were impacted both from an aircraft operations and economic perspective.

Norwood Memorial Airport was impacted the most severely of the 37 public-use general aviation airports as the entire runway/taxiway system was under one to two feet of water on two separate events. I would like to recognize Russ Maguire, Airport Manager of Norwood Memorial Airport, for his dedicated and persistent efforts in handling the significant flooding at his airport. Russ's outstanding work ethic throughout the rain events and follow up cleanup activities were critical in the timely re-opening of the airport once the waters receded. Hopefully, Mother Nature will provide us with some relief for the rest of the Spring!



*March 31, 2010 - Norwood Memorial Airport:
Flooding at Runway 28 Approach End, at Threshold,
Looking West (Photos by Russ McGuire)*

As you may recall, SH&E and their project team partnered with the former Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission (now the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Aeronautics Division) to determine the economic impact of the public-use general aviation airports throughout the Commonwealth in 1999. The results of the study highlighted the economic importance of our airports to the Commonwealth (a copy of the study is on our website at www.mass.gov/massdot/aeronautics). With the financial and technical support of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), we will be conducting another economic im-

pact study of the public-use general aviation airports throughout the Commonwealth. We will be selecting a consultant team later this month and begin developing the scope of work for the project. Once this is complete, we will submit a grant application to the FAA and await funding. If all goes well (FAA re-authorization), we look forward to starting this project in June.

As aviation professionals, we constantly try to find methods or ways to show our elected officials and the general public why our airports are important to our communities. I would like to share with you the results of a recent fact finding effort of the MassDOT Aeronautics Division regarding one aspect of airport operations at our public-use general aviation airports throughout the Commonwealth. Over a seven day period in February, we tracked 1,575 instrument aircraft operations at 30 of the 38 public-use general aviation airports in the Commonwealth. Please keep in mind, many more aircraft operations actually occurred within this time frame

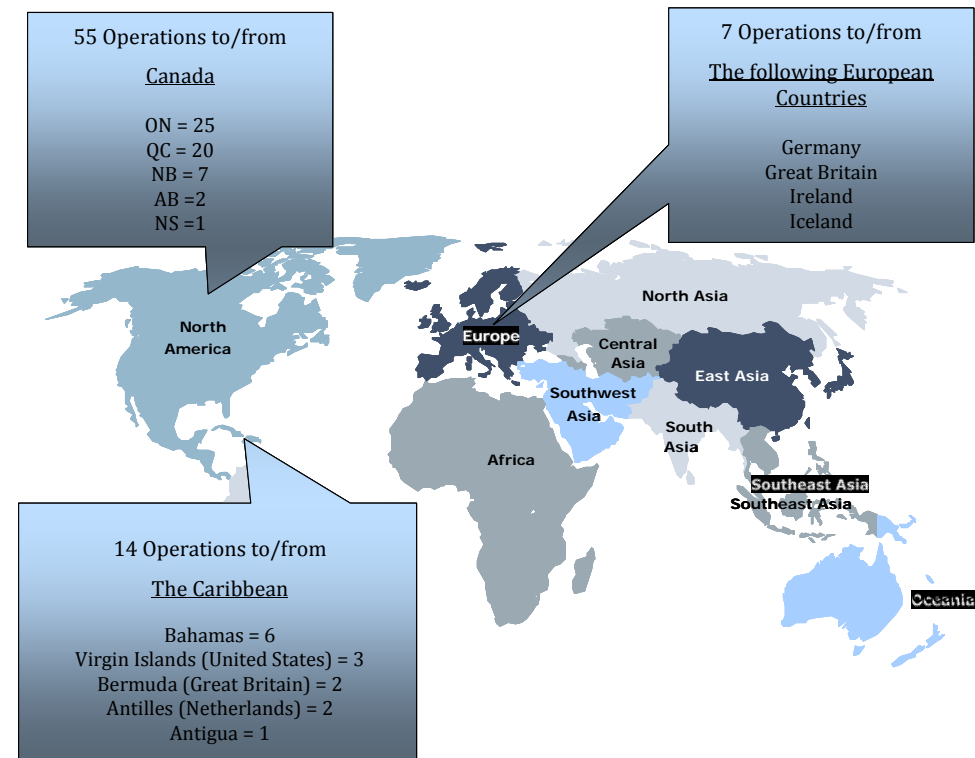
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The Aeronautics Division's mission is to promote aviation throughout the Commonwealth while establishing an efficient integrated airport system that will enhance airport safety, economic development, and environmental stewardship.

Administrator’s Message (Continued)

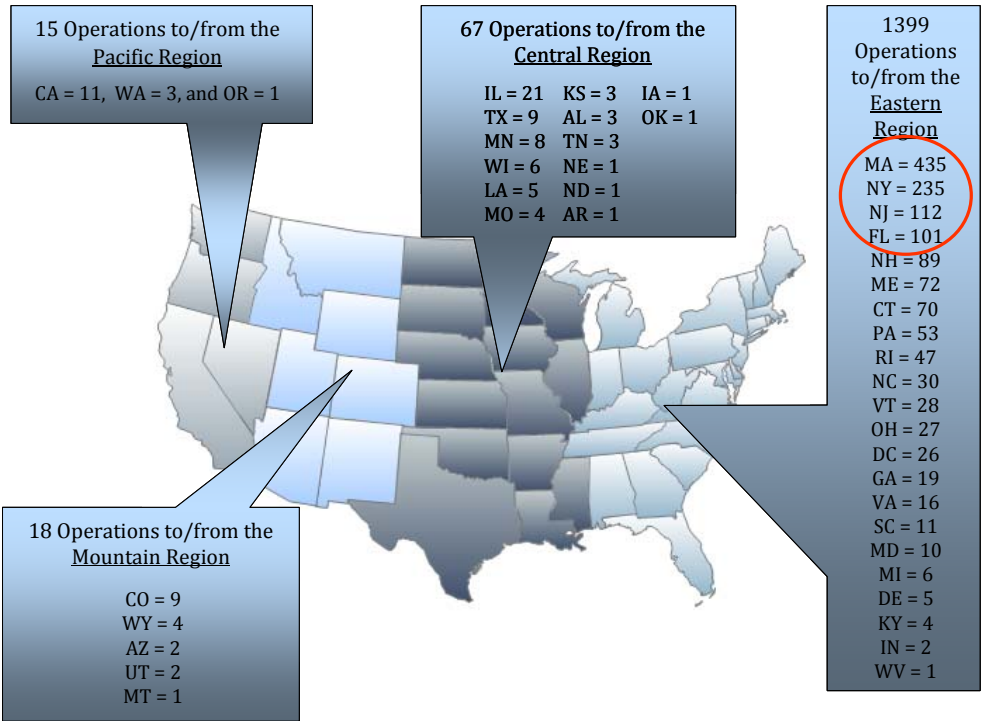
since we did not include aircraft operations under visual flight rules. Also, the data excluded out of state instrument aircraft operations to/from Boston Logan International Airport. The numbers were very interesting.



- 76 instrument aircraft operations occurred between the Commonwealth and various European/Caribbean countries and Canada. The furthest distance traveled was between Hanscom Airfield and Munich, Germany at 3,862 nautical miles.
- 1,499 instrument aircraft operations occurred between the Commonwealth and other destinations within the contiguous United States.
- 1,399 instrument aircraft operations occurred within the Eastern Region.
- 67 instrument aircraft operations occurred within the Central Region.
- 18 instrument aircraft operations occurred within the Mountain Region.
- 15 instrument aircraft operations occurred within the Pacific Region.

As you can see from this one week snapshot of our public-use general aviation airports, we play an essential role in supporting travel and tourism in the Commonwealth. I will be reaching out to the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism to discuss how we can enhance our partnership and increase the tremendous economic benefits of tourism to the Commonwealth.

Be safe and remember annual state airport inspections are underway!



Just Plane Folks - Featuring Don McPherson of Stow/Minute Man Airfield

By: Katie R. Servis (MassDOT Aeronautics Division)

In our last issue we highlighted one of our newest airport managers in the Commonwealth, Bryan Barnes, of Westfield-Barnes Municipal Airport. In this issue, we introduce you to one of our longest standing airport managers, Don McPherson, of Stow/Minute Man Airfield.

During my three hour tour at the airport on a bright sunny day in April, I soon came to realize that Don McPherson is required to wear many hats to fulfill his role as owner and airport manager of Minute Man Airfield in Stow, MA. Within a three hour period Don was an airport manager; airport engineer; host and waiter at Nancy's Airfield Café; and fuel tank operator. It was mind boggling as Don jumped from one thing to the next: from inspecting airport pavement that was damaged during the March Nor' Easter storms to seating guest and taking orders at Nancy's Airfield Café. Yet, Don seemed unflustered because this after all was a typical day at Minute Man Airfield. Don should know, he has been there for 38 years and during that time, Don has always had to wear different hats.

The airfield was founded in 1963 and was known as Erickson Field. In 1966, Don's father, Paul McPherson, purchased the airfield for \$60,000, which consisted of 100 acres and a 1,700-foot grass landing strip. However, within three years Paul, his wife Peg, daughter Paula, and son Don worked together to develop the facilities at the airfield in which, the runway was paved and extended by 300 feet, a parallel taxiway added, tie-downs for 50 planes constructed, and the Operations Building and coffee shop, Peg's Place, built (Peg's Place was operated by Don's mother Peg McPherson). The airfield was re-opened as Minute Man Air Field on July 1, 1969. So, as I was saying, Don had to wear many hats through the years. Whether it was operating heavy equipment to pave the runway and taxiway or the drill to build the Operations Building, Don did it all including getting his private pilots license!

Soon after the re-opening of the airfield, the customers starting pouring in, and Paul McPherson, just wanting to fly his aircraft, turned the reins over to Don and asked him to run the airport. Don had hangars built, a second runway constructed, aircraft parking aprons added, over 100 acres of additional land purchased to protect the runway approaches, and the paved runway extended by

another 770 feet for an overall length of 2,770 feet. A flight school was soon added as well as other airfield services such as air charter, aerial photography, aircraft maintenance, aircraft sales (Grumman

and Piper dealer) and rentals, and lessons in flying hot air balloons.

Although Don lost his father in 1972 after an aircraft accident in Acton, MA, Don continues to run the airport with the same set of objectives set up by his father, which is to, "...provide a safe, convenient, and pleasant facility for general aviation pilots and to be an asset to the town and surrounding neighborhood". Don also stressed that his father Paul created Minute Man Airfield for the general aviation pilot and that he would continue operating the facility with general aviation pilot's needs in mind. Don's slogan for Minute Man Airfield, "a place where piston pilots rule".

Did you know that Don is not only an airport manager, airport engineer, host and waiter at Nancy's Airfield Café, fuel tank operator, general contractor, carpenter, electrician, plumber, and pilot, but also an equestrian! That is right! Don and Nancy had prenuptial agreements prior to their marriage in January 1977; Nancy was required to learn how to fly, which she accomplished within 6 months after their marriage. Way to go Nancy! Don was required to learn how to ride horses, a passion of Nancy's, which he accomplished 27 years later - I guess he was busy.

Don and Nancy ride when they can on friends horses at nearby farms.



For 38 years Don McPherson has operated and maintained Minute Man Airfield!



March Madness

Record rainfall causes significant flooding at our airports

By: Katie R. Servis (MassDOT Aeronautics Division)/Photos by Russ McGuire (Airport Manager - Norwood Memorial Airport)

March 2010 has been a tough month for flooding in New England. Record rainfall has swollen rivers and affected many communities throughout the New England region including our airport communities.

The first Nor'Easter that moved through the Northeast during the weekend of March 12th brought with it such significant rainfall that it caused many of the rivers within the Commonwealth to swell well above the flood stage. The Neponset River swelled to its high mark of 11 feet; flooding the runways, taxiways, aircraft parking aprons, and shutting down the airfield lighting and guidance lights of Norwood Memorial Airport. Due to the devastation caused by the storm, Norwood Memorial Airport was forced to close the airfield to all fixed-winged traffic from March 15th through March 23rd!

A second Nor'Easter tore through the Northeast on Tuesday March 30th and added nine more airports to the list of those affected by the storms; once again, Norwood Memorial Airport was hit the hardest. See associated photos taken by Russ McGuire. With the ground already saturated from the previous storms our airports were left to deal with flooded airport parking aprons, terminal buildings, runways and taxiways.

- Fitchburg Municipal Airport experienced ponding on the taxiways where the storm drains could not funnel the water flow fast enough and an existing beaver pond covered a portion of a taxiway.
- Both Hanscom Field and New Bedford Regional Airport experienced some minor flooding on aircraft parking aprons due to slow drainage with some of the drainage ditches reaching maximum capacity.
- Mansfield Municipal Airport's turf runway was under water and had to be closed. Also, the basement of the terminal building/airport administration building collected over 3.5 feet of water and had to be pumped out by the Mansfield Fire Department.
- Marshfield Airport/George Harlow Field experienced flooding on Taxiway A near the approach end of Runway 24 and in the midfield and had to close that section of the taxiway. Most of the storm drains on the apron were at or over capacity, which caused some ponding in those areas. They also experienced some water in the basement.
- Northampton Airport experienced minor ponding in some low areas of the airfield.
- Plum Island experienced undermining of the apron and taxiway/runway intersection due to excessive flooding.
- Stow/Minute Man Airfield's Heath Hen Meadow Brook, which typically flows under the runway via a covered culvert, was flowing up and over the runway and taxiway causing erosion of the taxiway edge. This required the airport to close 1,000 feet of the southwest portion of the paved runway.
- Turners Falls experienced gusty winds and moderate to heavy rains, which caused some ponding around the aprons, taxiway and runway due to slow drainage.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Aeronautics Division, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and the airports affected by the March storms are exploring various federal and state funding sources to help cover flood damage after the disaster.



*Norwood Memorial Airport - Taxiway B
Looking East Across Taxiway D*



*Norwood Memorial Airport - Taxiway B,
Looking West Toward Flight Level Terminal and Aircraft Parking*



*Norwood Memorial Airport - From Taxiway B,
Looking West Toward DC-3 Apron*



*Norwood Memorial Airport - Runway 17/35
Looking South*



Norwood Memorial Airport - At the Runway 35 Threshold Markings Looking North

Wheels to Wings

An exciting aviation program for people with physical disabilities

By: Holly Lurgio (Northampton Airport Marketing Manager)

Wheels to Wings is not a new rental car program; rather, it is a flight training program offered at Northampton Airport (7B2) for people with physical disabilities. The program was started in 2009 at Northampton for the disabled to experience flying from the pilot's seat, challenge themselves, and to give themselves the opportunity to gain greater self-control and self-reliance.

The program uses Flight Design's CTLS, a light sport aircraft (pictured bottom left), which has a large cabin, extra wide cabin doors, and two way adjustable seats allowing for easy entrance and a comfortable experience. The ergonomic arrangement of the controls and instruments, plus the CTLS's terrific visibility makes learning to fly more relaxing and fun! Additionally, Flight Design Technik is making custom parts for a hands only control of the CTLS, making the aircraft available for people who don't have use of their legs.

Three students signed up for the program and made their inaugural flight in November 2009 for the First Annual Wheels to Wings Intro Flight Day, which went very well! With differences noted in each student's abilities, the airport had helpers on-hand to assist in the transition from wheelchair to aircraft and to make adjustments in the cockpit as necessary.

One of the program participants, Dave Lund (pictured right), showed some keen interest in getting licensed. The sport pilot certification, the first level of pilot licensure, was created by the FAA in 2004 with the hopes that it would make flying more accessible and more affordable. With a "driver's license medical" associated with a sport pilot license, a disabled person doesn't need to go through the extensive medical testing and waivers associated with the private pilot license. Therefore, making it possible for people with physical disabilities to achieve their pilots license!

Mr. Lund flew that day and then left for Florida for the winter; however, the airport hopes for his return in the spring of 2010. Mr. Lund indicated that the hand controls would be ideal for him and he hopes that they are available for use in the near future. If they were during his November flight, he said he would have signed up on the spot to get his license (the airport is currently waiting for the hand controls, which are removable controls, to go through an approval process for their use in the CTLS).



John Smith, one of the Wheels to Wings Instructors, explains the controls of Flight Design's CTLS to Dave Lund one of the three participants in the November 2009 program.



John Smith, one of the Wheels to Wings Instructors, assists Dave Lund one of the three participants in the November 2009 program into Flight Design's CTLS.



Flight Design's CTLS. The aircraft used for the Wheels to Wings Program at Northampton Airport.

On Saturday, April 17, 2010 Northampton Airport will host its 2nd Annual Wheels to Wings Intro Flight Day for those who would like to try flying! Participants will attend a 1 hour ground school followed by a 30 minute individual flight with instructor, John Smith.

The Intro Flight is offered at the discounted price of \$69 per person. Interested parties should call the airport at 413-584-7980 for more information and to sign up!

Upcoming Events



Date	Location/Time	Event
April 17	Northampton Airport (two flight sessions: 9am and 1pm)	Wheels to Wings This is a program designed to enable those who do not have use of their legs to experience the thrill of flying. Contact Holly Lurgio at 413.584.7980 or hollyl@fly7b2.com or visit (www.fly7b2.com).
April 17	Plum Island Airport (10am)	Centennial Anniversary Gathering Commemorative fly-over of the site of the 1910 Burgess aerodrome on Plum Island and classic aircraft fly-in. For more information visit www.plumislandaerodrome.org/index.html
April 18	Fitchburg Municipal Airport (8am - 2pm)	Ford V8 Auto Club Flee Market & Show
April 22	Mansfield Municipal Airport (10am - 3pm)	Massachusetts Airport Management Association Quarterly Meeting
May 2	Fitchburg Municipal Airport (9am)	Fly-in and All You Can Eat Pancake Breakfast (\$6 donation) Raffle tickets sold for a weekend trip to Oshkosh EAA AirVenture 2010 (tickets \$25 - drawing on May 11th).
May 11	Fitchburg Municipal Airport (BBQ @ 6pm, Seminar @ 7pm)	BBQ & FAA Wings Seminar: An evening with Mike Goulian
May 22	New Bedford Regional Airport (10am - 4pm)	Airport Fun Day New Bedford Regional Airport 1569 Airport Road, New Bedford, MA
June 5	Northampton Airport (9am - 1pm)	EAA Fly-In and FAA Seminar Free hot dogs and hamburgers and a brand new Husky on display! Contact Holly Lurgio at 413.584.7980 or hollyl@fly7b2.com or visit (www.fly7b2.com).

Publication Deadlines

Send suggestions for stories to the editor:
katie.servis@state.ma.us

May 3 - May 31: Send possible article ideas
June 7: Final submission of articles
June 17: Newsletter distribution

Commonwealth of Massachusetts



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